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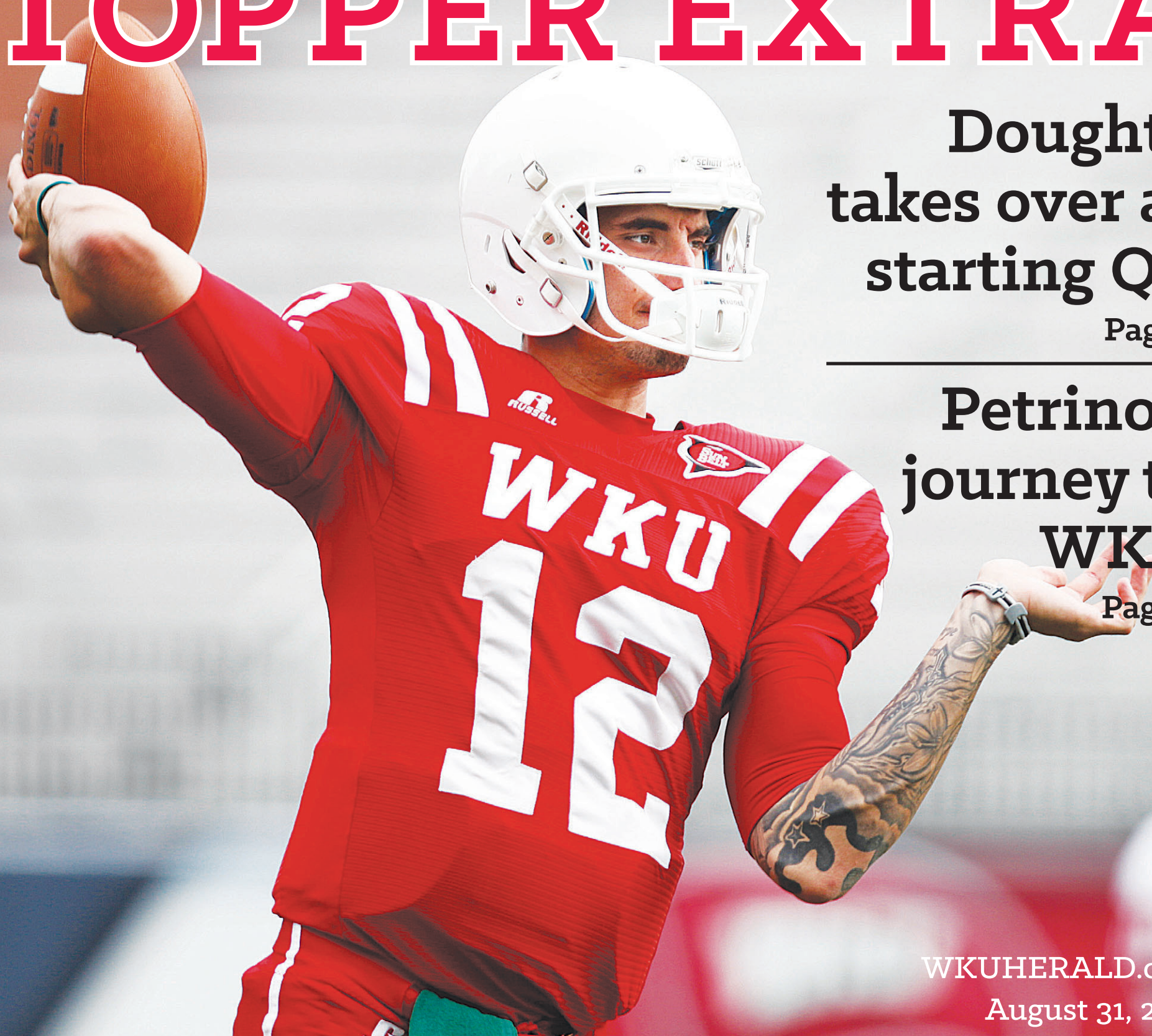
# TOPPER EXTRA

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# NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

## Doughty preparing for first season as starting QB

BY ELLIOTT PRATT  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

Brandon Doughty has experienced a whirlwind of events in his time at WKU. From an anterior cruciate ligament injury following a promising shot at the starting job in 2011 to mop-up duties last season, Doughty has been patiently waiting for his time to come.

That time will finally arrive Saturday night, when WKU takes the field against Kentucky at 6 p.m. at LP Field in Nashville.

Coach Bobby Petrino officially named Doughty the starter with the release of the team's depth chart earlier this week.

"He had a good camp," Petrino said. "He had a good spring. He's a young man that is very, very coachable. He really understands what we're striving for and does a nice job of getting the ball out and is an accurate thrower and has done a nice job on his leadership."

Though Petrino would not name an official starter until Monday, he and the other coaches had made it clear that Doughty was the front runner for the job even as far back as last spring, when he started for the first-team in the spring game.

Doughty has waited patiently and is excited his time has finally come.

"It's awesome," Doughty said. "God's blessed me so much and going through that (ACL) injury I was away from game planning not as much as I wanted to do. This year,

I'm really studying that film and meeting with Petrino and meeting with coach (Jeff) Brohm and really getting after it."

At one time, Doughty's college football career looked to take flight after entering the third quarter of the 2011 game against Navy replacing a benched Kawaun Jakes. Not much more could be asked of Doughty in that game, throwing 12-of-21 for 102 yards and a touchdown on his first drive.

His performance earned him the starting job the following week against Indiana State, but it was short lived — three plays, to be exact.

Doughty's starting debut was cut short by an ACL tear on a scramble down the sideline.

The next season, Doughty found himself at the bottom of the depth chart clocking in for relief against Austin Peay and Southern Mississippi. His season stats consisted of one completion on three attempts for seven yards.

Those numbers standing alone aren't going to win a starting quarterback job, especially when playing under coach Petrino.

But his willingness to learn at a high rate early in the year will have him starting against the Wildcats Saturday.

"I'm excited," Doughty said. "It's my last season. I want to go out on top. I'm excited about the season, excited about our team. We have a chance to be really great."

Before the spring game began, the quarterback position was a three-way battle between Doughty, redshirt



WKU junior quarterback Brandon Doughty takes practice reps in preparation for Saturday's game against rival Kentucky. IAN MAULE/HERALD

sophomore James Mauro, and redshirt freshman DaMarcus Smith.

Mauro, who was the favorite to succeed Jakes at the end of last season, left the program in May, opening the opportunity for Doughty to prove that his patience has paid off.

Doughty's strong performance in the spring game and throughout the summer workouts earned a vote by his teammates in favor of him becoming one of the captains.

"It was unbelievable," Doughty said when captains

were announced. "Words can't express how blessed I am. After coming through the ACL (injury) and stuff and being at my real low point like that and actually getting some confidence back with my teammates and showing that my teammates really have my back, that's the biggest thing."

Senior center Sean Conway has been there to see every high and low of Doughty's career and said his advancements in the offseason speak for themselves.

"He's done excellent," Con-

way said. "This offseason is real complex, and he's picked it up faster and more better than anybody I've been around. He's been doing great."

The pressure of the quarterback in Petrino's offense can be quite the load, but Doughty isn't worried. He's been waiting for this moment for a long time.

"I'm anxious right now," Doughty said. "...I know God's in control, and He's got my back out there. I have nothing to worry about. Fear no man, fear the Lord. I'm excited."

# New-look Toppers boast new faces at some positions

BY LUCAS AULBACH  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

The coaches aren't the only new faces taking the field for WKU this Saturday. Several position groups are experiencing turnover from last season, while others still have veterans at the top of the depth chart.

**Quarterbacks** — Junior Brandon Doughty earned the starting job after a strong showing at Spring and Fall Camps. He will be backed up by redshirt freshman Damarcus Smith, with sophomore Nelson Fishback and freshman Todd Porter waiting in the wing.

**Running backs** — Senior Antonio Andrews, fresh off of his record-setting 2012 campaign, looks to be the No. 1 back for the Toppers, though senior Keshawn Simpson, sophomore Leon

Allen, and redshirt freshman Anthony Wales could log some carries as well. The Toppers also have seniors Kadeem Jones and Nick Baisch as well as junior Demetrius Coley at fullback.

**Wide receivers** — Junior Willie McNeal led the Topper receivers last year and should play a big role in the offense this year. Freshman Taywan Taylor has also earned praise in camp, while senior Jamarielle Brown, junior Joel German, and freshman Nicholas Norris should also see the field.

**Tight ends** — Junior Mitchell Henry has replaced former Topper Jack Doyle, now competing for a spot with the Tennessee Titans, at the top of the depth chart.

**Offensive line** — Senior Sean Conway will be back at center, flanked on

either side by senior Luis Polanco and redshirt freshman Forrest Lamp. Junior Cam Clemmons and senior Ed Hazlett will get the start at tackle against Kentucky.

**Defensive line** — Senior Bar'ee Boyd and redshirt sophomore Gavin Rocker will line up at defensive end. The tackles will be shored up by redshirt freshman Devante Terrell and redshirt sophomore Bryan Shorter as this group tries to replace four starters from 2012.

**Linebackers** — Senior Andrew Jackson should be the heart and soul of the Topper defense in the middle, with senior outside linebackers Chuck Franks and Xavius Boyd on either side of him.

**Cornerbacks** — Junior Cam Thomas and senior Tyree Robinson will get the start against Kentucky, with former ju-

nior wide receiver Rico Brown and redshirt sophomore Prince Charles Iworah backing them up.

**Safeties** — Junior Jonathan Dowling, who hauled in six interceptions last season, will be the man most opponents focus on, but he'll share the field with senior Arius Wright, junior Ricardo Singh, and senior Kiante Young, who will not play Saturday due to an injury.

**Kicking** — Freshman Joseph Occhipinti and sophomore Garrett Schwetman have competed for the starting kicker spot this fall. Senior Hendrix Brakefield will be back to handle punts.

**Returns** — Senior Antonio Andrews returned nearly every kickoff and punt for the Toppers last season and should be back at it this year.

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# Hard-hitting Jackson a leader for WKU's defense

BY LUCAS AULBACH  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

WKU's leading tackler from the past two seasons hits hard on the field and talks big on the podium.

Senior middle linebacker Andrew Jackson has become the face of the WKU defense over the past two seasons. Since he stepped into the starting role in 2011, the 6-foot-1-inch senior has recorded 231 tackles and has been named to two consecutive All-Sun Belt Conference first teams.

Jackson, who recorded eight tackles against Kentucky in a winning effort last year, talks like a guy who knows he's the most feared player on the field.

"I ain't worried about UK—I don't even care nothing about 'em," Jackson said about Kentucky, WKU's first opponent this season, after practice on Wednesday. "We're going to handle them Saturday, so y'all just be ready for that."

Jackson could be the most important player on either side of the ball for WKU this season. He was elected to be a captain of the team during Fall Camp and is the anchor of a defense looking to replace its entire starting defensive line from a year ago.

Jackson will be joined on both sides by outside linebackers and fellow seniors Chuck Franks and Xavius Boyd.

Boyd, who joined Jackson in the starting lineup for much of last season, called it an honor playing next to the middle linebacker.

"He's been here four years and he's got great energy, always moving around," Boyd said. "Playing against him, I know if I out-tackle him, I guess I'm one of the top linebackers in the nation—just like he is."

Boyd isn't sugarcoating it when he calls Jackson one of the best at his position in the NCAA—he has gained recognition from many scouts and analysts as one of the top linebacker NFL prospects in college football.

Jackson is so strong, he said he actually

had to lose 10 pounds of muscle this summer to get into playing shape.

"My weight, really, was kind of messing with me a little bit, but I worked all summer to get back down to like, 255, around that area for my pass coverage, so I'm ready for the season," he said. "I was too big, really. I had muscle, but it was just too much, so I had to lean up a little bit and get right."

Sun Belt opponents have taken notice of WKU's man in the middle. The linebacker was recently named the preseason conference Defensive Player of the Year.

He might talk big—Jackson was famously caught on ESPN taunting Kentucky by saying "they supposed to be SEC" during the meeting between the two teams in 2011—but his numbers speak for themselves.

Last season Jackson recorded 122 tackles—39 more than WKU's No. 2 tackler—with two sacks and four forced fumbles. Along with former defensive end Quanterus Smith, Jackson was the most important piece of a group that finished No. 1 in the Sun Belt Conference in total defense.

Now a captain elected by his teammates to lead the team, the Toppers are expecting Jackson to lead them off the field as well as on it.

Defensive coordinator Nick Holt said he needs Jackson to help set the tone for his defense this year.

"He practices well every day and continues to get better, which he has," Holt said. "His habits have really improved. He'll have the chance to maybe make a living at this game, but that's way down the line. He needs to play really well against Kentucky."

Luckily for Holt, Jackson sounds like he has every intention of having a career day on Saturday.

"They've got a new coach that's going to try to come around with all the tricky, four-wide stuff, try to trick us up," Jackson said. "But we're just going to hit 'em in the mouth and get it over with."



WKU senior linebacker Andrew Jackson watches as fellow linebackers practice Tuesday.  
IAN MAULE/HERALD



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# Toppers playing with new faces on offense

BY LUCAS AULBACH  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

The Topper offense that takes the field Saturday will feature many familiar faces from last season's campaign as well as a few newcomers looking to make a difference under new offensive coordinator Jeff Brohm.

Former quarterback Kawaun Jakes graduated last season after throwing 22 touchdown passes, a WKU record. He will be replaced under center by junior Brandon Doughty.

Doughty saw his first action for WKU in 2011 when he replaced Jakes as the starter for a game against Indiana State. The quarterback tore his anterior cruciate ligament in the game and was sidelined for a year, but Doughty will be back at it when WKU opens the season against Kentucky Saturday at 6 p.m.

He said he's been working hard on the field and in the film room to prove to the coaches that he deserves the starting role.

"Going through that injury and stuff, I was away from game planning as much as I wanted to," Doughty said. "This year, I've really been studying that film and meeting with Petrino, meeting with coach Brohm, and really getting after it. I'm excited."

The Toppers are replacing more than just a starting quarterback from last season.

Former tight end Jack Doyle, currently competing for a spot on the Tennessee Titans' roster, graduated last year and left a huge hole in the WKU roster.

Doyle is one of the most decorated pass-catchers in WKU history — his 162 career catches are the most by a WKU tight end ever and rank No. 2 by any player in program history. His 1,769 total receiving yards are also the most ever by a Topper tight end.

Junior Mitchell Henry and redshirt sophomore Tyler Higbee have replaced Doyle at the top of the depth chart. Henry had 195 receiving yards and three touchdowns last season, while Higbee sat out as

a redshirt.

The Toppers are also replacing a couple of faces on the offensive line.

Adam Smith started every game at right guard for the Toppers last season, while Seth White was the starter all year at right tackle.

Redshirt freshman Forrest Lamp is taking over at right guard while senior Ed Hazelett, who started two games at left tackle last year, will start at right tackle during the opener.

A pair of freshmen from Louisville could see the field as well — Taywan Taylor, a wide receiver from Pleasure Ridge Park High School, has earned first-team reps throughout Fall Camp while Anthony Wales, a product of Central High School, sat out last season but could have a back-up role in the WKU offense in his first season of eligibility.

Taylor and Wales will back up two of the most important pieces of the Topper offense.

Junior wide receiver Willie McNeal was

the top WKU receiver last year, with 556 yards and six touchdowns on 43 receptions. He is listed at the top of the depth chart and could be a big part of coach Bobby Petrino's pass-happy offense.

Wales, meanwhile, will sit behind senior running back Antonio Andrews.

A lot of WKU's lofty preseason expectations rest on Andrews' shoulders. As a junior last season he racked up 3,161 all-purpose yards — 1,728 on the ground, 432 through the air, 767 on kickoff returns and 234 returning punts. The mark ranks No. 2 in NCAA history in all-purpose yards in a season, trailing only 1988 Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders.

Doughty said Andrews makes his job under center easier.

"Defenses key on Antonio, and he's also a good safety valve for us," he said. "Every time I get in trouble or our team is down, we just give the ball to '5' and he runs for a bunch of yards. It's awesome having a guy that can make plays out there for you and make you look good."

## Topper defense young on the line, experienced in the backfield

BY LUCAS AULBACH  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

The WKU defense has a few question marks up front but returns much of the back seven that helped the Toppers rank No. 1 in total defense in the Sun Belt Conference last year.

The WKU linebackers and secondary are stacked with veterans, but the Toppers will face the task of replacing four 2012 starters on the defensive line.

New defensive coordinator Nick Holt said he's looking forward to Saturday's season-opener against Kentucky — if only to finally get a look at his defense in action.

"The biggest concern is really the unknown of us being in the fire with these kids the first time," Holt said after Wednesday's practice.

"I'm sure they need to trust the coaches and the coaches need to trust the kids. I think that's the biggest concern, just getting out there and relaxing and doing what we're coached to do."

The Topper defensive line is a big unknown to the players as much as it is the coaches. Senior Bar'ee Boyd and redshirt sophomore Gavin Rocker top the depth chart at defensive end, while redshirt freshman Devante Terrell and redshirt sophomore Bryan Shorter will hold down the middle at defensive tackle.

Things look a little clearer in the backfield.

Senior middle linebacker Andrew Jackson will hold down the middle of the field. The senior has led WKU in tackles in each of the past two seasons and was named a captain coming into this year.

Jackson, who will be flanked by senior outside linebackers Chuck Franks and Xavier Boyd, said the Toppers have spent a lot of time this fall looking at Kentucky's offense and the offense that some of Kentucky's new coaches have brought with them.

"We've just got to know everything so just in case they do come out and try to run something else we already know it, we went over it, so nothing will be new," Jackson said. "We basically went over everything that they possibly could try to do."

The WKU backfield — a group who nicknamed themselves "the Air Force" last season — also has plenty of experience.

Senior Tyree Robinson and junior Cam Thomas will run with the receivers as WKU's starting cornerbacks. The duo combined for 95 tackles and three inter-

ceptions last season.

Seniors Arius Wright and Kiante Young will split time at free safety, while junior Jonathan Dowling looks to be the man at strong safety.

Dowling, a former Florida player who transferred to WKU, saw his first action last season. Dowling took advantage of the chance he was given, hauling in six picks and recording 68 tackles on the year.

While Jackson is the biggest name on the WKU defense, Holt said it's going to take more than one person for the defense to match last season's top performance.

"There's a couple other ones that have got to do a good job of getting kids lined up in the first game and having that little calming presence in the huddle," he said. "He's huge, but everybody's huge — whoever's out there has got to play well."



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# Petrino

## THE NEW FACE OF WKU

Bobby Petrino has spent the past 30 years making a name for himself as one of the most skilled and controversial coaches in all of football. His career path has taken him from his home in Montana to some of the top head coaching jobs in the NFL and NCAA. The man has compiled a 75-26 record as a coach in the past 10 years, with stints leading the Louisville Cardinals and Arkansas Razorbacks. From casual fans to national analysts, the name Petrino comes up in any conversation about the best coach in the NCAA.

So how did one of the biggest faces in college football end up at WKU?

Story starts on Page 13







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WKU coach Bobby Petrino watches over Tuesday's practice.

IAN MAULE/HERALD

(Opposite) Bobby Petrino poses for a photo on the football field Aug. 16, 2013. TYLER ESSARY/HERALD

# Bobby Petrino's Road to the Hill

## Coach brings rich history to WKU

BY ELLIOTT PRATT  
SPORTS@WKUHERALD.COM

**I**n 2004, President Gary Ransdell stood inside the corridor of a shambled football stadium.

Water erosion and broken concrete had become a never-ending challenge for a structure that, in three years, would see a major renovation to help take the program to the next level. The athletics department later made the decision to use \$37 million of private funds to add another side to the newly-endowed Houchens Industries L.T. Smith Stadium.

For a football program to compete in Division I-A football at a high level, this was an absolute mandatory measure. A school that boasted an annual football budget that edged just over \$3 million a year was willing to make all the necessary moves to eventually compete at the Football Bowl Series level rather than remain a stagnant program in Division I-AA.

Another football program was adjusting to changes of its own 113 miles north of Bowling Green.

The University of Louisville was fine-tuning the machine conducted by a coach that would take its product to a level higher than it had ever envisioned.

His full name is Robert P. "Bobby" Petrino. Petrino joined a new staff at Louisville in 1998 under the direction of his mentor, fellow coach John L. Smith, as the offensive coordinator to resurrect a team that went 1-10 the year before his arrival.

At the time, no one could guess that over the next eight years Petrino would produce a 75-26 head coaching record, make a bowl appearance in all of those eight years – including three Bowl Championship Series games – and establish himself as one of the biggest faces of college football.

Fast forward to Dec. 10, 2012, eight years from the days when slippery-when-wet signs tattooed the halls of Smith Stadium and eight years from the time Petrino was making a name for himself among college football's elite coaches.

WKU was looking for a football coach, and Bobby Petrino was looking for a job.

The abrupt departure of former WKU coach Willie Taggart led Athletics Director Todd Stewart to fill the void with his No. 1 target — he ended up making one of the biggest coaching hires of the year.

On that cold and cloudy Monday afternoon in the new Jack and Jackie Harbaugh Club atop Smith Stadium, Stewart introduced Bobby Petrino as the 18th head football coach of the WKU Hilltoppers.

Continued on Page 16

## Petrino Timeline

### 1985

Bobby Petrino is named offensive coordinator at Carroll College, his first coaching job.

### 1990

Petrino is named offensive coordinator at Idaho under John L. Smith.

### 1998

Petrino follows Smith to Louisville, where he serves as offensive coordinator.



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The Herald dates back to 1925 and is among the most honored college newspapers in the country. It has won 14 national Pacemaker awards, the most recent for 2012; five Gold Crown awards and seven Silver Crown awards.

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## The Journey

It was 11:38 p.m. — they both remember the time.

Todd Stewart took a shot in the dark and sent a text message to Petrino on Dec. 7, just hours after coach Taggart had accepted the same position at the University of South Florida.

At first, Stewart wanted to wait and call Petrino the next day, but he made the choice to go ahead and swing for the fences that night.

“I’m not really a patient guy,” Stewart said.

At 11:43 p.m., Stewart’s restlessness paid off in surprising fashion.

“He texted back and was like, ‘Yes, absolutely I would love to talk to you about the job,’” Stewart said. “I thought to myself, ‘Well, that’s encouraging.’”

For Bobby Petrino, coaching football was, is, and always will be his greatest passion — behind caring for his family, he said.

Football’s really the only thing he’s ever known because it’s always been the family business — his father and brother spent time coaching as well. But if he had never had the chance to call the shots on the field, Petrino said he would have been fine with settling down with a job with a little less stress.

“I was a good milkman in my days in college,” Petrino said. “I would have continued to work for Ed McHugh at Clover Leaf Dairy in Helena, Mont. For four years I worked the dock, and the fifth year I had to take a route.”

Carroll College in Helena, Mont., is where it all began for Petrino — or, you could say, the Petrinos.

Petrino played for his father, Bobby “Putter” Petrino Sr., whose legend of 26 seasons of coaching and 15 conference titles only adds to the idea that a winning trait may be hereditary in the Petrino

household.

Putter gave Petrino his offensive coordinator job at Carroll College in 1985, managing the Fighting Saints offense to the top of the NAIA for two seasons. The offense was led by a quarterback named Paul Petrino — Bobby’s younger brother — a four-year starter for Carroll.

The dairy business with Ed McHugh may have worked out, but there were better plans for Petrino.

He got his first shot after an interaction with John L. Smith, who was an assistant at the University of Montana while Petrino’s father was at Carroll College.

All he had to do to get Smith’s attention was be himself: a Petrino.

“My knowing of Bobby was more about my knowing of his father and how good a coach he was,” Smith said. “So when he was applying with me (at Idaho), I heard from people saying things like ‘Yeah, you got to take a look at Petrino because he’s a Petrino.’ That’s kind of how it all came in to being of him and I hooking up at Idaho.”

When Smith was named the new coach at the University of Idaho in 1989, Petrino knew about it before Smith even left his current job at the time with Washington State.

Smith said, “It’s really kind of funny because of the way that took place. I had more or less talked to, interviewed and applied with the people at Idaho. We’re in Hawaii playing in the Aloha Bowl, and I had gotten a special delivery letter from Bobby that read, ‘I know you’re going to be the next head coach at Idaho and I’d love to come work for you’...and this was way before anything was ever publicized. I remember looking at my wife and saying, ‘Wouldn’t it be funny if this kind of worked out this way?’”

It all came to fruition when Petrino joined Smith as the quarterbacks coach at Idaho and was promoted to offensive coordinator within a year.

Louisville Athletics Director, Tom Jurich

Was I disappointed he left? Absolutely because I really thought we were doing something special.

Smith was the real gateway to Petrino’s jump start into the coaching ranks. He represented more than a mentor to Petrino on the sidelines.

As with most assistant coaches, leaping from job to job can be a necessary, uncomfortable lifestyle to work up to being a head coach at some point. Petrino made nine stops before landing the head coach title at Louisville, but has been with Smith at four jobs up until now, whether working as an assistant under Smith, or vice versa.

“As an assistant, he’s part of your family, he’s part of your group and that’s the way you have to be in the coaching profession,” Smith said. “We were together long enough that my daughter baby-sat his kids. It’s just a part of the family, that’s what you do.

“...It’s been a great, great relationship that we’ve had — either he working for me or I working for him, so I love him like a brother...He treated me like gold.”

When Smith left Louisville to take over at Michigan State in 2003, Louisville Athletics Director Tom Jurich made the choice to bring Petrino back to the Cardinal sidelines. It was a quick decision, and he was clearly qualified because of his family history.

“The thing I always look at is he came from a football coach’s family,” Jurich said. “His father was a very, very successful and highly regarded head coach, and I think Bobby learned by osmosis there. I think people that live in those situations, they have a foot up on a lot of people because

they have so many experiences at the dinner table.”

Like any long journey worth traveling, a few bumps in the road may appear along the way. For Petrino, those rocky paths have followed him to a few destinations.

Just one year into his first head-coaching job at Louisville in 2003, Petrino spoke with Auburn about its head coaching position. He flirted with other teams while still with the Cardinals. Then after signing a 10-year contract, he bolted to the Atlanta Falcons of the NFL less than six months later.

Petrino left the Louisville program in 2007 on a high note: the Cardinals won the Orange Bowl after a 12-1 season, and the program’s success under Petrino helped Louisville — then a member of Conference USA — earn an invite to the former Big East Conference.

The relationship between Petrino and Jurich goes back when he was at Arizona State while Petrino was at Idaho, both schools being in the Big Sky Conference. Despite Petrino leaving the Bluegrass for the Peach State, Jurich said he didn’t blame Petrino for chasing the dream of coaching at the next level.

“Was I disappointed he left? Absolutely because I really thought we were doing something special,” Jurich said. “I think the continuity would have carried over and done great things, but I mean, who in the heck is going to stand in the way of

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### 1999

Petrino jumps to the NFL as quarterbacks coach of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

### 2001

Petrino becomes Jacksonville’s offensive coordinator.

### 2002

Petrino goes back to the college ranks, where he serves as offensive coordinator at Auburn for a year.

### 2003

Petrino is named head coach at Louisville after Cardinal coach John L. Smith leaves for Michigan State.

### 2004

Petrino and Louisville go 11-1 and win the Liberty Bowl over Boise State.

you going to take your dream job in the NFL? Obviously, a 20/20 in hindsight says you don't take it, but who would really know at that time? I would have done the same thing if I was Bobby."

If the famously-adopted acronym for the NFL being "Not-For-Long" stands true, Petrino can testify.

Just 13 games into his first season in Atlanta, he left a note in the team's lockers letting them know he had accepted the head coaching position at the University of Arkansas. The Falcons were 3-10 at the time.

The Southeastern Conference, where the fandom is as wild as a random "Calling of the Hogs" in Fayetteville, Ark., is the cream of the crop when it comes to NCAA football conferences, and Petrino was now in a position to contend for national titles.

Arkansas improved in each of his four years at the helm. The Razorbacks' only two losses in 2012 came against LSU and Alabama — those teams later faced each other in the NCAA National Championship.

A win at the 2012 Cotton Bowl put the Razorbacks as the No. 5 team in the NCAA at the end of the year, with a serious chance to contend for a national title the following season.

Petrino was on top of the world in college football, but it all came back down to Earth later that year.

The coach was involved in a motorcycle crash in April 2012. Though he initially said he was alone, it was later revealed he

had been with former Arkansas volleyball player Jessica Dorrell, who had recently been hired to work for the Arkansas football program.

In hindsight, the motorcycle crash may have saved Petrino and his family. When Arkansas fired its successful coach for lying about being alone in the crash, it showed Petrino the blessings he took for granted.

In an interview with ESPN's Joe Schad four months after the crash, Petrino opened up to emotionally express that he had wandered from the value he held most dearly — his family.

"All I know is I wasn't thinking and I wasn't acting correctly," Petrino told Schad. "It's not how I was raised, it's not how I raise my children. I take responsibility for it, and I really am sorry. I have played it over and over in my head a million times. How could I do this? How could this happen? And not just the hiring. Or that day. But my actions, my behavior — for months it was just wrong."

For the first time in around 30 years, Petrino would not walk the sidelines of a football field that fall. Critics still hang the scandal over his head today.

But at 11:38 p.m. on Dec. 7, Todd Stewart sent a text message — a message reaching out and willing to let Petrino's resume outweigh the baggage.

## The Family

The Arkansas scandal reminded him of a moral he was raised under: family first,

then football. Any efforts made to get back in to coaching would be based first and foremost on what was best for his family.

He hoped that some athletics director would trust he had changed, and Todd Stewart was that man to give him a second chance.

With college football's most famous and passionate fans reigning in cities with universities in larger conferences, WKU is a different story.

Petrino is quick to note that Bowling Green is different.

"The people have been great to me and my family and our coaching staff," Petrino said. "It's been awesome for us. My daughter and my grandchildren are here which is great. I have another daughter and a son that are up in Louisville going to school so there's plenty of trips back and forth for us, another son going to school here, so it's been a great deal..."

"I've been in a lot of college towns, and I really enjoy that. Anywhere I've been where the majority of the people are homegrown — I guess you could say — it seems like they welcome you with open arms. It was certainly that way in Louisville. It's that way here in Bowling Green. I've been able to make some really good friends and some great relationships, and I'm just looking forward to continue to building."

Family completes Petrino, according to Smith and others. When he's on the field, he surrounds himself with loved ones. Petrino brought along from Arkansas his son-in-law, L.D. Scott, as the defensive ends coach for WKU.

It's not uncommon to find his daughter and grandchildren in the stands during practice and Petrino can turn from aggressive coach to loving grandfather with the flip of a switch. On a Saturday during spring camp, WKU was hosting several recruits on campus. During a halftime break from a scrimmage, people from all over

the Hill could hear Petrino yelling at staff members to hurry up the process.

While Petrino was shouting aggressive instruction, his granddaughter was making her way over to see the coach. Like night and day, Petrino turned from angry coach to lovable grandfather.

"They've probably got a nickname for me," Petrino said. "They just call me 'Coach.'"

His grandchildren, Stevie Nicks, NCIS reruns and his wife Becky's lasagna are a few of his favorite things that have nothing to do with a pigskin. He usually keeps quiet and is a reserved man whose reputation on and off the field has kept the media talking for years.

His history of jumping from job to job and his affair with an employee he hired as an assistant at Arkansas provide a cloud that has and will follow him throughout his career. John L. Smith said his dismissal from Arkansas was a "fall in the road" to show Petrino what he really needed.

"If you see him out with his grandkids — and I'm sure you have — he needs the family around him," Smith said. "Sometimes, we need to have that fall in the road to realize how much we need the people around us and I'm sure it's a situation that he looked at and said, 'Boy, I need my family and I will do anything I can do to get them back.'"

Keeping family together reaches outside the lines of blood for Petrino. During his year of absence from the sideline in 2012, Petrino leaned on others in the business for advice to bounce back from the fall. He even went back to his former boss at Louisville.

"The thing I really wanted Bobby to do was own it," Jurich said. "He gets an A-plus in my book for doing that. He's really worked hard, he's made mistakes and he's going to learn from them...He's going to be a much better husband, a much better

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Former Louisville Coach and Petrino associate, John L. Smith

Sometimes, we need to have that fall in the road to realize how much we need the people around us.

## 2006

Coaching future NFL players such as Elvis Dumervil and Michael Bush, Petrino leads Louisville to a 12-1 season and Orange Bowl win.

## Jan. 2007

Petrino accepts head coaching position with the NFL's Atlanta Falcons.

## Nov. 2007

Petrino resigns as coach of the 3-10 Falcons and heads back to the NCAA to take over as coach of the Arkansas Razorbacks.

## Jan. 2011

After two rebuilding years at Arkansas, Petrino's Razorbacks finish 10-2 and lose to Ohio State in the Sugar Bowl. Arkansas finishes No. 12 in the AP Poll.

## Jan. 2012

Petrino leads the Razorbacks to an 11-2 season and win over Kansas State in the Cotton Bowl. Arkansas finished No. 5 in the final AP Poll, the school's highest finish since 1977.

WKU Athletics Director, Todd Stewart

We can do 10 more coaching searches and not have a resume like Bobby Petrino's.

father, and a much better coach."

Petrino was indeed open and up front with Todd Stewart. If he wasn't, he still may be looking for a job.

He wasn't just open to Stewart, though, WKU's athletics director said — he's been open to Bowling Green.

"He goes out in restaurants all the time, he's very available, he likes it when people come up and talk to him, he goes to a lot of sporting events on campus," Stewart said. "He is very much of a presence, and I think that's how people relate to him."

## Show Time

Bobby Petrino hasn't had a week like this in 20 months. The last time he planned for a game was January 2012, when his Arkansas Razorbacks defeated Kansas State in the Cotton Bowl.

But his approach is a bit different now. He can now relate to the lyrics of an old, familiar tune of the citizens of the Commonwealth where "by and by hard times come a-knocking at the door." Now, Petrino is back in his old Kentucky home.

The coach isn't the only one excited about the fresh start, according to Jurich.

"I know as we talked through the whole situation prior to him taking the Western job was that he wanted Becky and the family to be comfortable and excited

about it," Jurich said "Once they were, he was totally on board."

WKU has bought into Petrino, and he has bought into WKU.

That triangle needs a top, and Petrino said the team is working on building a product to get the fans excited.

"The first thing we have to do is put a great product on the field," Petrino said. "Get some players that the fans can really identify with, making it exciting and energized. Everyone likes the style of play that we have and it's our job to build the fans."

It's been nine months since the eruption of cheers and a spontaneous "Go Tops" welcomed Bobby Petrino to the Hill in the Jack and Jackie Harbaugh Club for his introductory press conference.

If hundreds of people can show up for a press conference to welcome Bowling Green's newest celebrity, then the coined phrase of "show time" is only appropriate for the year that lies in front of WKU.

Six years ago, the program was in a one-sided stadium in the Gateway Conference and was in desperate need of a change. Bobby Petrino was in need of a change, and now everything has changed at WKU.

"For our fans, it validated how serious we are about being successful at the I-A level," Stewart said. "We can do 10 more coaching searches and not have a resume like Bobby Petrino's."

## April 2012

Petrino is involved in a motorcycle accident and is fired after lying to Arkansas officials about an affair with an employee.

## Dec. 2012

After spending a season away from football, Petrino is hired by WKU to replace Willie Taggart as coach.

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# WKU players to watch



**ANTONIO ANDREWS**  
Senior running back

- Collected 3,161 all-purpose yards last season, good for No. 2 in NCAA history, including 1,728 on the ground.
- Posted 125 rushing yards and three rushing touchdowns against the Wildcats last season, as well as three catches for 36 yards.
- WKU's leading returner last year, Andrews had 19 punt returns for 234 yards and a touchdown as well as 28 kick-off returns for 767 yards.



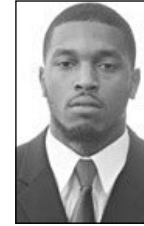
**LUIS POLANCO**  
Senior left guard

- Started 11 games at left guard last year, and was named an offensive captain this season.
- Blocked for Andrews during his record-setting season as well as former quarterback Kawaun Jakes, who set the WKU record for passing touchdowns in a season with 22.



**ANDREW JACKSON**  
Senior middle linebacker

- Led WKU in total tackles with 122 on the year last season and was named to the All-Sun Belt Conference first-team for the second straight year.
- Has led the WKU defense in tackles in 14 of the past 26 games the Toppers have played.
- Rated as one of the top NFL linebacker prospects in the NCAA.



**JONATHAN DOWLING**  
Junior strong safety

- Pulled in six interceptions last season, the most on the team and No. 5 in the NCAA, and was named to the All-Sun Belt Conference first-team.
- Intercepted Kentucky quarterback Maxwell Smith three times in last year's game, the most in a game by a WKU player since 1978, though he fumbled during one of the ensuing returns.



**BAR'EE BOYD**  
Senior defensive end

- Pegged as a starter for WKU at defensive end this season after recording 28 tackles at outside linebacker last year.
- Finished No. 2 on the team behind former defensive end Quanterus Smith in sacks last season with 3.5.
- Recorded the only Topper sack in the game against Kentucky last year.

# UK players to watch



**MAXWELL SMITH**  
Sophomore quarterback

- Expected to split time with fellow sophomore quarterback Jalen Whitlow against WKU this weekend.
- Started against WKU last season, finishing with 332 yards, two touchdowns and four interceptions while completing 37-of-60 passes.
- Started four games before suffering a season-ending ankle injury, collecting 975 yards and eight touchdowns on 103-of-150 passing.



**JALEN WHITLOW**  
Sophomore quarterback

- Expected to split time with fellow sophomore quarterback Maxwell Smith against WKU this weekend.
- Started in seven games last season and finished the year with 801 yards and three touchdowns through the air, completing 87-of-161 passes.
- Dual-threat quarterback who rushed for 206 yards and three touchdowns last year.



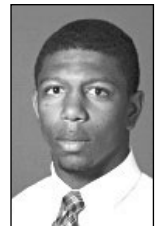
**RAYMOND SANDERS**  
Senior running back

- Led Kentucky last season with 669 rushing yards and five touchdowns, though he did not play against WKU.
- Picked up 111 receiving yards on 18 catches last year, averaging 6.2 yards per catch, and led the team with 1,003 all-purpose yards.
- Could split carries with fellow senior running back Jonathan George.



**AVERY WILLIAMSON**  
Senior middle linebacker

- Led Kentucky with 135 total tackles last season — good for No. 2 in the SEC — and recorded 70 solo tackles.
- Recorded a game-high 14 tackles and an interception against WKU last season.
- Named to the All-SEC third-team by league coaches this preseason.



**ALVIN DUPREE**  
Junior defensive end

- Led Kentucky in total sacks last season with 6.5 and started in all 12 games.
- Ranked No. 2 in tackles on the team last year with 91 and led the team with 12.5 tackles for loss.
- Expected to start at defensive end this season after splitting time at linebacker and defensive end the past two years.

